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DIST 2 FEBRUARY 1973

COUNTRY LAOS

DOI FEBRUARY 1973

SUBJECT 1. PROCEEDINGS OF SECOND ROUND OF RLG/NLHS SECRET TALKS, RLG/NLHS AGREEMENT ON POINTS RELATED TO POW'S AND TROOP WITHDRAWAL
2. RLG NEGOTIATORS' MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA AND THEIR REQUEST HE DISCUSS U.S. SUPPORT TO RLG AND ICC WITH VICE PRESIDENT AGNEW

TO WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM: NO DISTRIBUTION EXCEPT TO DR. KISSINGER
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ESO 31-74 - Q

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: FEB 2001

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SUMMARY.

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1. ROYAL LAO GOVERNMENT (RLG) AND NEO LAO HAK SAT (NLHS)

DELEGATIONS

FEBRUARY 1973 AT THE NLHS

RESIDENCE IN VIENTIANE IN THE SECOND ROUND OF THE NEWLY INSTITUTED

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SECRET PEACE TALKS. THE RLG SIDE,

INITIATED DISCUSSIONS REGARDING A CEASE-FIRE BY PROPOSING THAT NO FORCES IN LAOS BE ALLOWED TO CHANGE THEIR POSITIONS AFTER THE START OF A CEASE-FIRE. THE NLHS SIDE,

COUNTERPROPOSED THAT AFTER THE CEASEFIRE, IN THOSE PLACES WHERE SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF OPPOSING FORCES ARE LOCATED, BOTH SIDES PULL BACK ONE OR TWO KILOMETERS TO AVOID CLASHES. THE RLG RESTATED ITS INSISTENCE THAT THERE BE A WITHDRAWAL TO 1962 LINES FOLLOWING A CEASE-FIRE. NO AGREEMENT WAS REACHED BY THE TWO SIDES ON THE CEASE-FIRE ISSUE, AND THE MATTER WAS REMANDED FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING.

2. REGARDING PRISONERS OF WAR (POW), THE NLHS PROPOSED THAT THE ISSUE OF A POW EXCHANGE BE LEFT UNTIL AFTER A CEASE-FIRE AND THAT THE ISSUE BE HANDLED SEPARATELY BY AN ENLARGED COMMISSION. THE TWO SIDES AGREED THAT POW'S OF ALL NATIONALITIES WOULD BE DEALT WITH BY THIS ENLARGED COMMISSION.

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3. THE NLHS PROPOSED AGAIN THAT THERE BE A TOTAL HALT TO UNITED STATES BOMBING IN LAOS. THE RLG, MAKING AN OBLIQUE REFERENCE TO NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY (NVA) ARTILLERY, AGAIN PROPOSED A HALT TO ALL BOMBARDMENT. [REDACTED] REMARKED THAT THERE SHOULD ALSO BE A CLAUSE TO INCLUDE NORTH VIETNAMESE AERIAL ATTACKS, SINCE NORTH VIETNAM HAD USED AIRCRAFT IN LAOS IN THE PAST. [REDACTED] ASSERTED THAT HIS SIDE HAS NO AIRCRAFT. THE RLG THEN PROPOSED THAT THE PHRASE IN THE AGREEMENT SHOULD REFER TO A HALT IN ALL BOMBING AND BOMBARDMENT. [REDACTED] REJECTED THIS LANGUAGE, AND THE ISSUE WAS ALSO SET ASIDE UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING.

4. THE RLG SIDE STATED THAT THERE SHOULD BE A WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN TROOPS FROM LAOS, INCLUDING NVA AND CHINESE TROOPS. [REDACTED] RESPONDED THAT THE CHINESE IN LAOS ARE ENGAGED IN A ROADBUILDING PROJECT AND THAT CHINESE TROOPS ARE IN LAOS SIMPLY TO PROTECT THE ROADBUILDERS; THEREFORE, THE PROJECT DOES NOT REPRESENT MILITARY AGGRESSION. THE RLG DELEGATION EXPRESSED INSISTENCE THAT THE PHRASE "ALL FOREIGN TROOPS BE WITHDRAWN" BE INCLUDED IN ANY AGREEMENT, AND [REDACTED] FINALLY AGREED TO THIS LANGUAGE. HOWEVER, THE NLHS SIDE MAINTAINED THAT ALL IRREGULAR

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FORCES BEING PAID AND SUPPORTED BY THE UNITED STATES SHOULD EITHER BE WITHDRAWN OR ELIMINATED.

5. CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION ENSUED BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES CONCERNING SUPERVISION AND CONTROL OF A CEASE-FIRE. THE NLHS PROMOTED THE CONCEPT OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONTROL COMMISSION (ICC) BASED IN VIENTIANE TO SUPERVISE THE CEASE-FIRE. THE RLG SIDE PROPOSED AN ICC SUPPORTED BY A MIXED RLG/NLHS COMMISSION AND HAVING THE FACILITIES TO MONITOR THE CEASE-FIRE THROUGHOUT LAOS. NO AGREEMENT WAS REACHED ON THE ISSUE. IN ONE HEATED EXCHANGE DURING THE DISCUSSION, [] CLAIMED THAT PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA PHOUma HAD VISITED INDIA NOT TO DISCUSS THE ICC BUT TO SEEK MILITARY SUPPORT FROM INDIA. [] ALSO CLAIMED THAT SOUVANNA'S TALKS IN BANGKOK WITH THAI PRIME MINISTER THANOM KITTAKACHORN AND U.S. AMBASSADOR UNGER WERE FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING CONTINUING THAI MILITARY SUPPORT FOR THE VIENTIANE SIDE. THE RLG DELEGATION FIRMLY REJECTED THESE ACCUSATIONS.

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6.

[REDACTED] REPEATED AN RLG PROPOSAL FROM THE

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FIRST SECRET SESSION, SAYING THAT WHILE THE TWO LAO SIDES MIGHT WORK OUT A SETTLEMENT, THE GREAT POWERS SHOULD BE BROUGHT IN ON THE FINAL DAY TO SIGN THE EVENTUAL AGREEMENT. [REDACTED] PROPOSED THAT NORTH VIETNAM, THE UNITED STATES AND THE GENEVA ACCORDS CO-CHAIRMEN, THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE USSR, SHOULD SIGN THE FINAL LAO SETTLEMENT. [REDACTED] AGAIN REJECTED THE IDEA.

7. THE NLHS AGAIN PRESSED FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A POLITICAL CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL (PCC). THE RLG SUGGESTED THAT THE NAME OF SUCH A BODY BE SOMETHING SIMILAR TO "THE COMMISSION FOR RECONCILIATION AND CONCORD," AND THAT ITS FUNCTIONS BE DEFINED AS A BODY IN SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE NLHS, IN A CLARIFICATION, SAID THAT THE PCC'S FUNCTIONS WOULD BE TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT AND TO PROMULGATE REGULATIONS. [REDACTED] SAID THAT THE PCC SHOULD BE APPROVED BY THE KING AND ITS MEMBERSHIP SHOULD BE DESIGNATED BY THE THREE PARTIES IN LAOS, BUT WHETHER IT COMES INTO BEING BEFORE OR AFTER A CEASE-FIRE IS NOT IMPORTANT.

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THE RLG SIDE, AS IN THE FIRST SECRET SESSION, REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE PCC CONCEPT. [] ALSO REFUSED [] RESTATED PROPOSAL THAT THE NLHS JOIN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BY ASSUMING ONE-THIRD OF THE SEATS. [] REMARKED THAT TO REJECT THE PROPOSAL IS TO REJECT THE LAO CONSTITUTION AND THE KING. [] RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT [] SHOULD NOT QUESTION WHETHER OR NOT [] RESPECTS THE KING AND CONSTITUTION.

8. THE RLG SIDE ASKED THAT AN EFFORT BE MADE TO DEFINE TERMS MORE CAREFULLY AND TO USE MORE PRECISE LANGUAGE. THE RLG ALSO PROPOSED THAT WHEN AGREEMENT IS REACHED ON A SPECIFIC ISSUE, THE RESULTS BE PUBLISHED. [] REJECTED THE LATTER IDEA, SAYING THAT THE RESULTS SHOULD BE MADE PUBLIC ONLY AFTER A FINAL AGREEMENT IS REACHED. THE NLHS SIDE INFORMED THE RLG DELEGATION THAT NLHS ADVISOR P H O U M I VONGCICHIT WOULD ARRIVE IN VIENTIANE VIA AEROFLOT AT 1500 HOURS 3 FEBRUARY. THE MEETING ADJOURNED AFTER BOTH SIDES AGREED TO MEET AGAIN AT 0930 HOURS [] FEBRUARY AT [] HOME.

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9. FOLLOWING THE [REDACTED] SESSION, THE FOUR RLG DELEGATES MET SHORTLY WITH PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA, WHO EXPRESSED APPROVAL OF THE HANDLING OF THE SECRET TALKS. SOUVANNA SAID THAT HE COULD NOT ACCEPT THE NLHS CONCEPT OF A PCC. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOUVANNA SAID THAT HE DOES WANT A CEASE-FIRE AND THE FORMATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND NEW ELECTIONS THIS YEAR, WITHIN SIX MONTHS IF POSSIBLE.

10. THE RLG NEGOTIATORS URGED THAT SOUVANNA BRING UP TWO SUBJECTS DURING HIS 3 FEBRUARY MEETINGS WITH U.S. VICE PRESIDENT SPIRO AGNEW: (A) SEEK U.S. SUPPORT FOR JEEPS, HELICOPTERS AND AIRCRAFT FOR USE BY THE ICC IN LAOS; AND (B) OBTAIN A U.S. GUARANTEE TO SUPPORT THE RLG IF NORTH VIETNAM VIOLATES A CEASE-FIRE IN LAOS. SOUVANNA SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS THESE MATTERS WITH VICE PRESIDENT AGNEW. SOUVANNA ALSO SAID THAT DURING HIS VISIT TO INDIA, HE OBTAINED PRIME MINISTER INDIRA GANDHI'S SUPPORT FOR AN ENLARGED INDIAN CONTINGENT FOR THE LAO ICC.

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